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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of school principals was studied with the goals of: identifying skill dimensions related to principals' performance; identifying a set of independent psychological constructs from a factor analysis of those dimensions; and using the variables of school size, district size, school grade level, and geographic region of Washington State to test a universal trait and behavior approach to describing effective leadership. A review of literature on effective school leadership identified 39 skill dimensions related to effective performance of school prinipals. Supervisor ratings were obtained for 583 principals (a 38.7% response rate) across the 39 skill dimensions and 10 State performance standards. Data analysis demonstrated that 37 of the skill dimensions had significant positive correlations with the 10 measures of job performance. Fifteen dimensions had correlations above 0.6 with overall performance. Factor analysis suggested that the following constructs accounted for 61.4% of the variance: (1) instructional leadership; (2) interpersonal skills; (3) organizational commitment; and (4) personal drive and motivation. Chi square, correlational, and t-tests confirmed the universality of the 37 skill dimensions and four major constructs across the four moderator variables. More effective principals had higher ratings on the same 37 dimensions regardless of the situational factors. The rating sheets used are included. Three tables give information about the study and the factor analysis. Recommendations to enhance school leadership are made based on the findings. (SLD)

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CRITICAL DIMENSIONS OF PRINCIPALS' PERFORMANCE

by

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ABSTRACT OF STUDY

Purposes of this study were to: (1) identify skill dimensions significantly related to the performance of school principals; (2) identify a set of independent psychological constructs from a factor analysis of those dimensions and, (3) utilize moderator variables of school size, district size, school grade level and geographic region of Washington state to test the Universal Trait and Behavior approach to describing effective leadership.

A review of effective school and leadership literature suggested 39 skill dimensions related to effective performance of school principals. Supervisor ratings were obtained for 583 principals (38.7% response rate) across the 39 skill dimensions and ten state performance standards.

Data analysis demonstrated 37 of the 39 skill dimensions had significant positive correlations (ranging from .697 to .206) with each of the ten measures of job performance. Dimensions with correlations above .600 with OVERALL PERFORMANCE were: DEMONSTRATES LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PROCESS SKILLS, DEMONSTRATES SKILL IN MAKING DECISIONS, ACCOMPLISHES TASKS TO ACHIEVE GOALS, ESTABLISHES CLEAR SCHOOL GOALS, ESTABLISHES HIGH EXPECTATIONS, SOLVES PROBLEMS SKILLFULLY, DEMONSTRATES INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS, DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, EXHIBITS PERSUASIVE SKILLS, DEMONSTRATES SELF MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE, INITIATES AND MANAGES CHANGE, SHOWS GOOD JUDGEMENT, DEMONSTRATES CRITICAL THINKING AND ANALYTIC SKILLS, MANAGES TIME EFFECTIVELY, and PLANS AND ORGANIZES.

A factor analysis of the 37 skill dimensions suggested the following major psychological constructs accounting for 61.4% of the variance: (1) INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP (including Intelligence and Communication Skills), (2) INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, (3) ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, and (4) PERSONAL DRIVE AND MOTIVATION.

Chi-square, correlational and t-tests confirmed the universality of the 37 skill dimensions and four major constructs across the four moderator variables. More effective principals had higher ratings on the same 37 of 39 skill dimensions identified in the literature review regardless of the situational factors of school size, district size, grade level of school (Elementary, Middle, Jr. High, or High School), or geographic region of the state. Likewise, the four major constructs extracted were independent of the situational factors studied.

To support the the above conclusions, the following sections will provide data tables, summaries and analyses:

* Survey utilized to collect data;
* Correlations of Dimensions with Job Performance
* Factor Analysis
* Situational Effects
* Conclusions and Recommendations

PART I. Indicate the extent to which the principal in question exhibits the given characteristic. As the supervisor of the principal, please use your best judgment in responding to each description. You may omit an item if you feel you do not have enough information to properly respond.

KEY: A - Always
F - Frequently
O - Occasionally
S - Seldom
N - Never

	A	F	O	S	N	
(01)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES HIGH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE
(02)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY
(03)	___	___	___	___	___	ESTABLISHES CLEAR SCHOOL GOALS
(04)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
(05)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS
(06)	___	___	___	___	___	EXHIBITS A NEED TO CONTROL MOST SITUATIONS
(07)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYTIC AND CREATIVE SKILLS
(08)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES SKILL IN MAKING DECISIONS
(09)	___	___	___	___	___	DELEGATES EFFECTIVELY
(10)	___	___	___	___	___	IS ENERGETIC
(11)	___	___	___	___	___	ESTABLISHES HIGH EXPECTATIONS
(12)	___	___	___	___	___	PROMOTES SENSITIVITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS
(13)	___	___	___	___	___	INITIATES AND MANAGES CHANGE
(14)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS
(15)	___	___	___	___	___	MODELS INTEGRITY
(16)	___	___	___	___	___	SHOWS GOOD JUDGMENT
(17)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PROCESS SKILLS
(18)	___	___	___	___	___	MANAGES
(19)	___	___	___	___	___	MONITORS
(20)	___	___	___	___	___	HOLDS TO PERSONAL OPINIONS
(21)	___	___	___	___	___	PLANS AND ORGANIZES
(22)	___	___	___	___	___	EXHIBITS PERSUASIVE SKILLS
(23)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES POLITICAL SENSITIVITY
(24)	___	___	___	___	___	SOLVES PROBLEMS SKILLFULLY
(25)	___	___	___	___	___	ACCOMPLISHES TASKS TO ACHIEVE GOALS
(26)	___	___	___	___	___	PROVIDES NECESSARY RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE SCHOOL GOALS
(27)	___	___	___	___	___	YIELDS TO OTHERS
(28)	___	___	___	___	___	TAKES RISKS
(29)	___	___	___	___	___	SHOWS SELF CONFIDENCE
(30)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES SELF MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE
(31)	___	___	___	___	___	SUPERVISES AND EVALUATES STAFF
(32)	___	___	___	___	___	AIDS IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT
(33)	___	___	___	___	___	MANAGES TIME EFFECTIVELY
(34)	___	___	___	___	___	DEMONSTRATES PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE
(35)	___	___	___	___	___	TOLERATES DIFFERENT METHODS OF ACCOMPLISHING GOALS
(36)	___	___	___	___	___	TOLERATES UNCERTAIN GOALS
(37)	___	___	___	___	___	TOLERATES STRESS
(38)	___	___	___	___	___	EXHIBITS AN ORIENTATION AND COMMITMENT TO A VALUE SYSTEM
(39)	___	___	___	___	___	EXHIBITS HIGH VISIBILITY IN HIS/HER BUILDING

PART II Indicate the principal's level of competence for each of the following State Performance Standards.

Rating Scale for level of Competence:
5 - Extremely Competent
4 - Very Competent
3 - Adequate Competence
2 - Minimally competent
1 - Not Competent

(40) ____ KNOWLEDGE OF FIELD - in areas of educational administration relevant to building management, supervision, curriculum, and instruction.

(41) ____ BUILDING ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT - to serve accountably in administering the unit assigned responsibility; to initiate alternate patterns of space, time, and student-staff groupings; oversee plans for the care, maintenance and beautification of the physical environment; establish policies and procedures that govern changes in the school; and develop master and class schedules.

(42) ____ COMMUNITY RELATIONS - to use community resources in assessing and developing school programs, solving school community problems, and implementing a public information program which promotes positive interactions between the school and community.

(43) ____ PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP - to assist staff in developing and implementing instructional, curricular, and assessment programs.

(44) ____ FISCAL MANAGEMENT - to implement principles of fiscal management and record keeping and to identify fiscal needs emanating from the program, facility, and resources.

(45) ____ ACTIVITY COORDINATION - to plan and develop governance policies and supervise and evaluate student activities.

(46) ____ AUXILIARY SERVICES - to coordinate auxiliary services such as health services, transportation, food services, pupil personnel services, maintenance, and learning resource programs.

(47) ____ STAFF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT - to select, assign and evaluate staff personnel; to interpret district collective bargaining agreements relative to staff personnel; to implement district personnel policies and procedures; and to understand the dynamics of staff relationships and decision-making processes within the building.

(48) ____ STUDENT PERSONNEL - to maintain attendance and student personnel records and implement effective principles of discipline, student control, and student management.

(49) ____ OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE RATING

PART III Other Information

(50) _____ Grade Level of Principal's Current School:
(1) Elementary (3) Junior High
(2) Middle School (4) High School

(51) _____ Number of Students in Principal's School

(52) _____ Approximate Number of Students in School District

(53) _____ Local ESD:

(1) ESD 101	(4) ESD 113	(7) ESD 123
(2) ESD 105	(5) ESD 114	(8) ESD 171
(3) ESD 112	(6) ESD 121	(9) ESD 189

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CORRELATIONS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES WITH JOB PERFORMANCE

In response to the major question (What is the relationship between specific skill dimensions and job performance?) all but two of the 39 skill dimensions had significant correlations with OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE. Table 1 presents the correlations between each of the 39 skill dimensions and the 10 job performance criteria utilized in this study.

While there are several ways to rank order the skill dimensions most highly related to job performance, the list in Table 2 meets two major criteria and, as such, represents the group of Skill Dimensions most highly related to job performance. The fifteen all had correlations with OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE of at least .60 and had correlations of at least .50 with five or more of the 10 performance criteria.

TABLE 1: Intercorrelation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

DIMENSION	KNOW LDG	ADMIN MGMT	COMM REL	PROG LEAD	FIS- CAL	ACT COORD	AUX SERV	STAFF MGMT	STUD ENT	OVER ALL
ACHIEV	.61	.39	.32	.55	.30	.35	.37	.49	.39	.54
ADAPT	.33	.34	.48	.41	.22	.28	.34	.45	.38	.45
GOALS	.58	.55	.47	.67	.39	.40	.49	.61	.53	.67
ORAL	.49	.47	.44	.57	.36	.38	.47	.54	.46	.59
WRITTEN	.51	.43	.39	.53	.33	.34	.42	.49	.41	.53
CONTROL	.11	.17	-.06	.08	.11	.14	.08	.07	.10	.08
CRITTHNK	.61	.51	.41	.65	.35	.40	.48	.61	.48	.62
DECISION	.55	.57	.46	.59	.38	.43	.48	.64	.50	.68
DELEGATE	.41	.44	.40	.45	.31	.35	.39	.48	.40	.49
ENERGY	.43	.44	.39	.49	.28	.42	.40	.44	.41	.52
EXPECT	.58	.55	.45	.65	.34	.46	.46	.59	.51	.67
HUMREL	.36	.36	.54	.47	.25	.28	.36	.46	.37	.47
CHANGE	.58	.54	.46	.66	.37	.41	.46	.62	.50	.64
INSTLDR	.66	.52	.47	.75	.34	.40	.44	.63	.48	.67
INTGRTY	.42	.37	.39	.41	.34	.35	.42	.42	.40	.46
JUDGMENT	.50	.52	.51	.53	.36	.39	.47	.61	.53	.63
LEADER	.59	.55	.54	.67	.33	.39	.47	.67	.47	.70
MANAGER	.45	.57	.38	.46	.49	.48	.48	.52	.49	.56
MONITOR	.49	.50	.39	.55	.40	.41	.44	.54	.45	.58
OPINION	.23	.26	.11	.18	.25	.23	.15	.20	.17	.22
PLANS	.57	.56	.40	.57	.44	.36	.44	.54	.48	.61
PERSUADE	.59	.55	.48	.58	.34	.42	.44	.60	.47	.65
POLITICS	.39	.45	.52	.40	.33	.35	.44	.47	.38	.51
PROBSOLV	.53	.56	.56	.59	.39	.42	.50	.65	.50	.67
TASKS	.60	.59	.45	.61	.45	.48	.54	.62	.53	.67
RESOURCE	.48	.51	.40	.51	.40	.39	.49	.51	.47	.58
YIELDS	.16	.14	.30	.17	.11	.18	.20	.20	.18	.21
RISKS	.46	.44	.43	.52	.27	.38	.40	.55	.40	.54
SELFCONF	.49	.48	.42	.51	.31	.37	.39	.55	.45	.58
SELFMOTV	.55	.51	.45	.60	.34	.44	.42	.57	.48	.64
EVALSTF	.51	.46	.37	.57	.38	.36	.41	.54	.44	.56
STAFFDEV	.56	.48	.44	.67	.36	.38	.45	.55	.44	.59
TIMEMGMT	.53	.56	.45	.53	.48	.38	.52	.56	.53	.61
PROFKNOW	.69	.51	.46	.65	.36	.40	.46	.57	.49	.66
DIFFMETH	.37	.35	.42	.40	.23	.33	.34	.41	.34	.46
UNCERTN	.00	-.02	.14	-.01	.01	.07	.04	.05	.02	.01
STRESS	.22	.29	.30	.26	.28	.30	.29	.34	.32	.35
VALUES	.47	.43	.39	.48	.39	.41	.47	.44	.40	.49
VISIBLE	.42	.48	.45	.51	.26	.42	.40	.46	.47	.55

(See Figure 1 for complete variable names)

TABLE 2: Skill Dimensions Most Highly Correlated with OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE ($p<.01$)

DIMENSIONS	Correlation with OVERALL PERFORMANCE	Number of Correlations with 10 Job Criteria Above .50	Above .60
LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PROCESS	.70	6	3
SKILL IN MAKING DECISIONS	.68	6	2
ACCOMPLISHES TASKS	.67	7	3
ESTABLISHES CLEAR GOALS	.67	6	3
ESTABLISHES HIGH EXPECTATIONS	.67	5	2
SOLVES PROBLEMS SKILLFULLY	.67	8	2
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	.67	5	4
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE	.66	5	3
PERSUASIVE	.65	5	1
SELF MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE	.64	5	2
INITIATES AND MANAGES CHANGE	.64	6	3
SHOWS GOOD JUDGEMENT	.63	6	2
CRITICAL THINKING AND ANALYTIC	.62	5	4
MANAGES TIME	.61	7	1
PLANS AND ORGANIZES	.61	5	1
ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS	.59	3	
AIDS IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT	.59	5	1
PROVIDES NECESSARY RESOURCES	.58	4	
SHOWS SELF CONFIDENCE	.58	2	
MONITORS	.58	3	
SUPERVISES AND EVALUATES STAFF	.56	4	
MANAGES	.56	3	
HIGH VISIBILITY	.55	2	
TAKES RISKS	.54	3	
ACADEMIC ACHIEV, INTELLIGENCE	.54	3	1
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS	.53	3	
ENERGETIC	.52	1	
POLITICAL SENSITIVITY	.51	1	
COMMITMENT TO A VALUE SYSTEM	.49		
DELEGATES	.49		
SENSITIVITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS	.47	1	
MODELS INTEGRITY	.46		
TOLERATES DIFFERENT METHODS	.46		
ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY	.45		
TOLERATES STRESS	.35		
HOLDS TO PERSONAL OPINION	.22		
YIELDS TO OTHERS	.21		

FACTOR ANALYSIS

The second goal of the study reported here was to identify the major groupings, or factors, suggested by the ratings. To accomplish this a factor analysis was performed using the 37 skill dimensions found to be correlated with OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE. Four factors (accounting for 61.4% of the total variance) were extracted in the analysis. The literature review suggested several major constructs, or factors, could be used to describe effective leadership. An analysis of the dimensions loading on each factor was done to determine an appropriate label for each. Data analysis lead to the identification of the four constructs, or factors listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Four Extracted Factors Variance and Skill Dimension Loadings

Factor	Variance	Construct Name
Factor 1	25.2%	Instructional Leadership
Factor 2	14.6%	Interpersonal Skills
Factor 3	12.2%	Organizational Commitment
Factor 4	9.5%	Personal Drive and Motivation

Factor 1: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	Loading
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE	.72
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	.72
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	.71
CRITICAL THINKER, ANALYTIC & CREATIVE	.70
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE	.69
ORAL COMMUNICATION	.69
AIDS IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT	.65
LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PROCESS SKILLS	.65
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	.63
ESTABLISHES CLEAR GOALS	.63
INITIATES AND MANAGES CHANGE	.60
PLANS AND ORGANIZES	.59
SUPERVISES AND EVALUATES STAFF	.59
PERSUASIVE	.56
ACCOMPLISHES TASKS	.55
DECISION MAKING SKILLS	.55
SELF MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE	.53
MANAGES TIME	.53
MONITORS	.48
SOLVES PROBLEMS	.48
SHOWS SELF CONFIDENCE	.47
MANAGES	.45
PROVIDES NECESSARY RESOURCES	.42
TAKES RISKS	.41
DELEGATES	.40
SHOWS GOOD JUDGMENT	.39
ENERGETIC	.38
ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY	.34
SENSITIVITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS	.30

Factor 2: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	Loading
TOLERATES DIFFERENT METHODS	.77
SENSITIVITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS	.74
ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY	.71
YIELDS TO OTHERS	.67
POLITICAL SENSITIVITY	.66
SHOWS GOOD JUDGMENT	.55
SOLVES PROBLEMS	.54
MODELS INTEGRITY	.53
DELEGATES	.52
TOLERATES STRESS	.47
LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PROCESS SKILLS	.38
COMMITMENT TO A VALUE SYSTEM	.36
INITIATES AND MANAGES CHANGE	.34
HIGH VISIBILITY	.33
DECISION MAKING SKILLS	.32
PROVIDES NECESSARY RESOURCES	.31

Factor 3: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT	Loading
MONITORS	.63
MANAGES	.61
COMMITMENT TO A VALUE SYSTEM	.57
MODELS INTEGRITY	.55
HOLDS TO PERSONAL OPINION	.55
MANAGES TIME	.51
ACCOMPLISHES TASKS	.49
PLANS AND ORGANIZES	.49
PROVIDES NECESSARY RESOURCES	.46
HIGH VISIBILITY	.44
SUPERVISES AND EVALUATES STAFF	.43
SHOWS GOOD JUDGMENT	.40
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	.39
ESTABLISHES CLEAR SCHOOL GOALS	.37
SELF MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE	.36
ENERGETIC	.33
DECISION MAKING SKILLS	.31

Factor 4: PERSONAL DRIVE AND MOTIVATION	Loading
TAKES RISKS	.67
SHOWS SELF CONFIDENCE	.65
SELF MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE	.55
TOLERATES STRESS	.51
ENERGETIC	.50
PERSUASIVE	.49
INITIATES AND MANAGES CHANGE	.38
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	.37
HOLDS TO PERSONAL OPINION	.36
DECISION MAKING SKILLS	.35
LEADERSHIP AND GROUP PROCESS SKILLS	.35
HIGH VISIBILITY	.33
SOLVES PROBLEMS	.30

SITUATIONAL EFFECTS

The last question to be addressed in this study was: Do certain situational factors influence the relationship between skill dimensions and job performance, or do the skill dimensions tend to generalize across those situational factors? To answer this question data was also collected on the four moderator variables identified earlier. The four situations tested were: GRADE LEVEL OF SCHOOL, SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, DISTRICT ENROLLMENT and EAST-WEST REGIONAL EFFECTS (as measured by local ESD).

Various statistical analyses suggest that situational factors do not influence the relationship between skill dimensions and job performance. The skill dimensions identified in this study generalized across the four situational factors presented.

There were no significant differences in the distribution of ratings for principals at any of the four grade levels. There were significant but small positive correlations between both size of the school district and size of the school and supervisor's ratings on certain variables. Analysis suggests that while principals in larger schools and school districts in the western region of the state received higher ratings than other principals in the state, a factor analyses did not suggest the existence of meaningful differences caused by the situational variables studied.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study would suggest that the critical factors and skill dimensions related to principals' performance generalize to many situations -- those at any grade level and in districts and schools of any size and location.

1) Results could be used by professional organizations and university credentialing programs to focus their respective training and education programs.

2) University credentialing programs should utilize these results in the development and refinement of their principal training programs.

3) Administrative assessment centers could use the identified dimensions and/or factors as a focus when developing assessment exercises.

4) School districts may decide which of the dimensions, or factors, must be built into the selection process and which should be the focus of principal training programs (such as Project LEAD).

5) Supervisors could use this research to define, reinforce and build upon those skills related to performance on the job.

Following any of these recommendations will enhance our school leadership as we strive to meet the needs of our changing student population.